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# Review of Beyond Survival: Managing Academic Libraries in Transition

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BEYOND SURVIVAL: MANAGING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN TRANSITION.  
ELIZABETH J. WOOD, RUSH MILLER, AND AMY KNAPP. *Westport, Connecticut;*  
*London: Libraries Unlimited, 2007, 218 pp., ISBN 1-59158-337-3. paperback.*

There have been quite a number of books and articles concerning the academic library in transition, so do we really need another? I suppose to some extent that depends upon how many one has read, but I must vote “thumbs up” on this one! Wood, Miller, and Knapp have produced an extremely useful volume that has something in it for most academic librarians.

First, it is well researched and well written. The approach is a little different than typically found in this type of book in that it combines a thorough review of what is happening, why libraries must change, and a scholarly analysis of many management tools to help accomplish that change. Then in the middle of this excellent material, there are several chapters on the work done at the University of Arizona Libraries and at the University of Pittsburgh Library System.

Many librarians are familiar with the dramatic organizational changes that began to take shape at the University of Arizona Libraries in the early 1990's. In addition to reviewing the planning and strategies involved in making these changes, which will be useful to any library where similar changes must be implemented, chapter 4 also provides a great number of insights into the stumbling blocks encountered along the way. Any librarian who has not been involved with such efforts will benefit from this material.

Chapters 5 through 7 focus on two change cycles at the University of Pittsburgh's University Library System. The first cycle of change began with a focus on technical services with the second cycle focusing on public services. Again, these chapters provide excellent material on why change was necessary as well as a detailed analysis of the planning involved. Again, this material provides excellent background for any librarian or group of librarians who

have been charged with making a similar transition from past practice, excellent though it might have been, to a new, more proactive future.

The volume continues and concludes with two chapters, one on accountability and assessment and the final one titled, “Positioning the Academic Library For a Vibrant Future.” Many writers, even those extremely fond of academic libraries, continue to question its future. The authors quote (p. 192) Jerry Campbell, “Considering the extra-ordinary pace with which knowledge is moving to the web, it is equally difficult to imagine what an academic library will do and be in another decade.” Quite frankly, I can imagine lots of things that an academic library can do to help users access and use information. However, it is certain that these efforts must clearly add value to the quality of the educational experience. A careful study of the information presented in this book will help librarians chart that new course and continue to add quality to the educational experience. In fact, I am going to read this one again!

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